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ABSTRACT

This report presents information from the 1996-97 seminar, Men Helping Boys with Difficult Choices II. The primary purpose of the seminar was to extend the opportunity to provide a support program to other schools in Albany's Capital region. The seminar involved groups of educators gathered to discuss the issue at hand. The report includes information on the seminar as well as detailed, specific, and concrete programs to be presented in the schools during the spring of 1997. The report includes programs with outlines, sometimes materials used, activities, and in some cases, evaluations. The report also attempts to provide the flavor and substance of the discussions that occurred in the seminar. After presenting information on the seminar process, the participants, and the 5 days of discussion, the report describes programs of men helping boys at six middle schools, high schools, and a community college. (SM)

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A View from the Inside:

Men helping Boys

Difficult Choices II

ED 429 078

R. Bamberger

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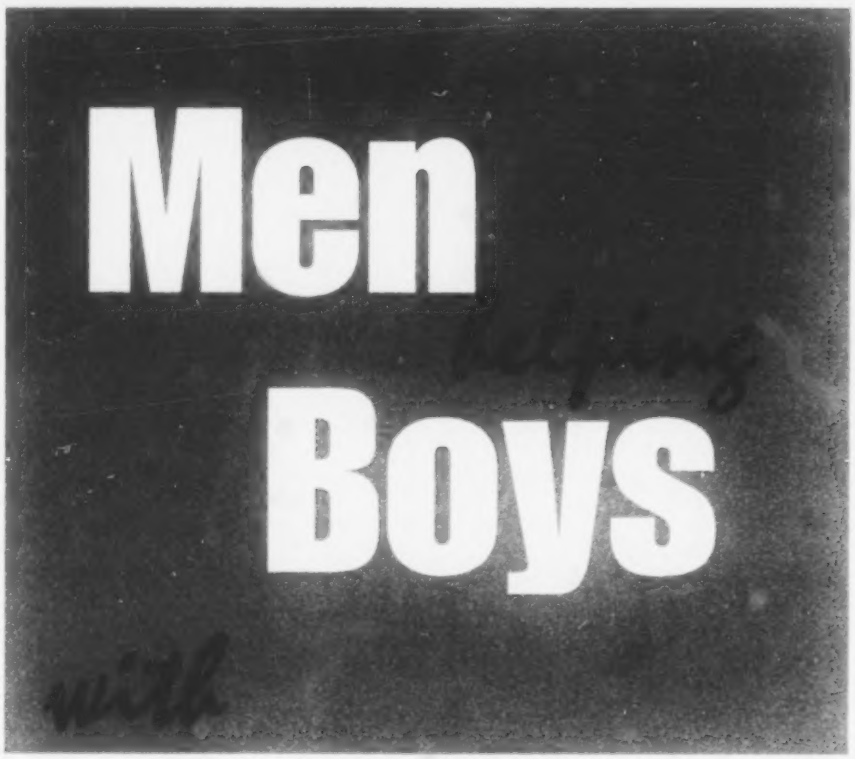

Difficult Choices II

October 1997

A Report of the Select Seminar on Men Helping Boys with Difficult Choices II

Sponsored by the Capital Area School Development Association, School of Education, University at Albany, State University of New York and supported with funds from the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act (VATEA #8010-96-0301 and 8020-96-0200)

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Select Seminar Process

The Capital Area School Development Association (CASDA) has been sponsoring Select Seminars since 1985 as a form of professional development. These Seminars provide a forum for educators to consider major issues and make written recommendations to improve the quality of education. Reports of the Select Seminars are published by CASDA and circulated regionally and nationally. Reports have been reproduced by four State Departments of Education for use in professional development and orientation programs.

The Select Seminar process has received a great deal of attention and has been replicated across the country. It has been extremely gratifying to be credited by colleagues with developing what is essentially a quite simple format and process.

The CASDA Select Seminars follow a very simple structure based upon a set of guiding principles:

1.

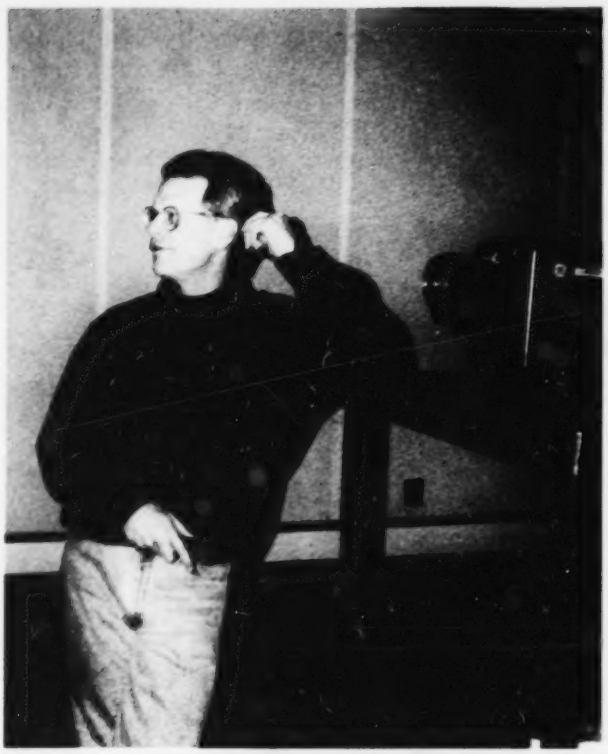
Participants need to commit adequate time—to work, to reflect, and to write. Most Seminars have been conducted for five full days spread about a month apart over the first three months with the final session being a two-day overnight retreat in the middle to the end of the fourth month.

2.

A conducive working environment is very important. The Seminars have been conducted in "protected environments"—away from the work site, in quiet and aesthetically pleasing surroundings with special care being given to the quality of food and refreshments. We believe this clearly is a first step in communicating to participants that the Seminar is special and there are high expectations that the deliberations of its members will have an important result.

Select Seminar Process *continued*

3.



The Seminar participants are the experts. We believe these Select Seminars have been highly successful in part because of the high degree of personal and professional respect afforded participants and the central belief on which the Seminar series was founded: "that consciously competent teachers and administrators are the best arbiters of educational practice." While participants do extensive reading during the Seminars, visiting experts and lecturers are not usually a part of this experience. The participants of a Seminar are the body of experts.

4. ***Roles are "checked at the door."*** One's ideas must stand on their own, be debated, accepted, or discarded without reference to one's position or education. There is never just one role group represented in a Seminar.

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Select Seminar Process continued

5.

Seminars are self-governing entities with organizers serving the group.
The coordination of the Seminar is managed by personnel from CASDA. After providing the initial structure and on-going logistical support, they work to transfer the governance and direction from themselves to the participants. By the end of the Seminar, it is fair to say that the Seminar becomes self-governed with the coordinators taking direction from the Seminar group.

6.

The experience is at least as important as the product.
All Seminar participants agree that the process, the experience, is most important; in fact, the report might be quite different if the process continues over time, instead of representing but one point in an ongoing process when, although there is much agreement on important issues, there is some disagreement as well. Even so, the report provides an important documentation of the experience and serves to validate for each of the participants the energy and effort they expended. We also firmly believe that such an ongoing conversation can only result in better education for all of our children.

We also firmly believe that this process effectively promotes significant professional development. The use of the process in other states, the popularity of the Seminar reports, and the many testimonials from the participants over the years convince us of the viability of the process.

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Introduction

With the success of the 1995-96 Select Seminar on Men Helping Boys with Difficult Choices, many Seminar members wanted to continue the project into 1996-97. From these members came a planning committee which secured funding, chose schools to participate, decided the format, chose the dates, and invited the participants. The primary purpose of this second Seminar on the same topic was to extend the opportunity to provide this kind of program to other schools in the Capital region.

CASDA's Select Seminars conclude after five days of meetings with a published report detailing the content of discussions about the selected topic and then providing recommendations for future actions. This Select Seminar was different in that its final product was not only a report but detailed, specific, and concrete programs to be presented in the schools during the spring of 1997. This report includes those programs with outlines, sometimes materials used, activities, and in some cases, evaluations. These program plans will be of great help to other groups of teachers who plan to develop their own plans for similar programs. We sincerely hope that these programs will be catalysts for others to achieve programs in their schools of "Men Helping Boys with Difficult Choices."

This report, as others in this series of ***Views from the Inside,*** also attempts to provide the flavor and substance of the discussions which occurred in the Select Seminar. This subject resulted in conversations which contained much more emotional content than is usually observed in a Select Seminar. In order to document as much as possible the emotional content of the Seminar conversations, much of what follows is "in their own words." The report provides more actual voices than other Seminar reports, because this subject may only be closely visited by providing more, rather than less.

First Day

" 'Manhood' needs to be redefined in a way that allows women equality and men pride. Our culture desperately needs new ways to teach boys to be men. Via the media and advertising, we are teaching our sons all the wrong lessons. Boys need a model of manhood that is caring and bold, adventurous and gentle. They need ways to be men that don't involve violence, misogyny, and the objectification of women. Instead of promoting violence as a means of solving human problems, we must strengthen our taboos against violence. Some Native American cultures have no words in their language for hurting other humans. What do those cultures think of us?"(Reviving Ophelia by Mary Pipher, p. 290)

Providing models of manhood that are "caring and bold, adventurous and gentle" was one of the goals of the Select Seminar on Men Helping Boys with Difficult Choices II. To realize this goal, the Seminar required the teams from the school districts to focus on real programs or pilots which would be implemented in the schools during the spring of the year. The concrete result of the experience remained elusive for many of the participants until the third meeting, which consisted of two days and an overnight at the Rensselaerville Institute. The final programs or pilots are included in this report as models so that other schools may emulate, adapt, adopt or develop their own programs.

But between the final programs and the opening day of the Seminar lay much growth and introspective soul searching on the part of the participants. On the opening day, particularly, the comments were as diverse as the participants and provide a preview of the depth of discussion to come:

"Talk, talk, talk. Will anything good come from all this talk? I am a man of action—I like to do something, accomplish something, solve something. All of these discussions boggle my mind as I try to nail down where it is all going and what will be the end of it."

"Much of the early sharing seemed to sidestep directly the special needs/issues surrounding boys. The references were to the 'kids,' the 'students' that the teachers worked with. It was not until a couple of men actually stepped out and identified with specific issues that boys are dealing with or that they have seen at school, that the sharing began to open up more."

"We all had similar experiences and feelings that affected how we reacted to situations and how we felt we should have handled the situation. The sharing of how these feelings were developed was critical to me as I have never shared or had anyone share with me the role that 'history' has in how/why we react the way we do."

"I am not alone!"

"Going around the circle was very satisfying: hearing the separate perspectives. Men and women speaking about raising some sons, as well as teaching, especially interested me because I'm not a parent yet, and I have had already countless anxious moments wondering how this raising of our children will be done. Can I do it as well as I want to? I have been pretty conscious most of my life about the man I am. Of course my notions of myself have needed lots of adjusting because of what I learn, but I feel a lot better about being a man now than when I was younger."

"I am not alone!"

Not only in the introductory statements in the morning, but also in the small group discussions came the emerging issues upon which the school teams focused as they developed their pilot programs:

"It seems that there is a common thread for all—the concern for values and the ability to make proper decisions."

"Many of the young boys I encounter have only sports, music and television personalities to look up to. Because of this these kids only see a one-dimensional portrayal of how men might choose to solve problems."

"What struck me was the concern expressed about establishing some sort of way of getting across the idea of self control and value. How does one do that? Is it done simply by modeling behavior or is it to be done another way?"

"So much of the stereotypical male image is based on being strong and brave. However the act that takes the most courage is being honest, going out on a limb in an unpopular situation, putting yourself on the line, expressing your true feelings."

"Alienation is a theme that has struck me lately in looking at how easy it is for some boys to disconnect themselves from others. It seems more than simple independence and has a more negative feel to it . . . alienation allows for disrespect and the blaming of others. It also fuels apathy, lack of empathy and may contribute to the increase of violence in schools."

> *"...it takes more of a man to walk away from a fight than to stay and fight."*

"Our middle school aged boys need opportunities in their communities to interact with healthy young men. Many of the students I work with come from single parent homes with little guidance and in most cases, no father. Many of the boys have little respect for themselves, peers, and adults."

"I often say to my students that it takes more of a man to walk away from a fight than to stay and fight."

"This country has grown up with the idea that individuality, strength and forthrightness are qualities important for every man. These are fine but it is also important that caring, compassion, and humbleness be a part of the mix."

"Someone mentioned the word 'hunger.' This is a good way of describing the deep, deep need we all have for a father who reaches down into us and draws out the

unique individual person who is the man within each boy."

"The feeling that violence and lack of respect for others is so pervasive was discussed and seems to be an area that might be addressed by some aspect of this Seminar."

"Men/boys act much differently when they are with girls."

"What it means to me to be male is simply physical . . .according to society. The stereotype includes a reluctance towards emotion, physical dominance, winning at any cost, having many sexual relationships, athleticism and stereotyping. A middle school boy is taught these lessons at a very early age by the fastest vehicle and loudest teacher of all—the media. Sensationalism for the dollar encourages boys to become men with an assumed identity—a conditional identity—void of feelings or emotion. Violence is the answer to how to express oneself—the concept of violence takes the place of speech—it becomes a form of communication—a boy/man may feel as empty of himself, that violence is a way to actually get in touch with himself."

"What are the issues?

1. *Men and boys can become trapped by stereotypes.*
    a. *It is not masculine to be a good student.*
    b. *It is not masculine to express one's feelings.*
    c. *It is not masculine to be empathetic or sympathetic.*

2. *Men and boys may lack the skills necessary to succeed in life —skills such as networking, communications, self-expression, empathy.*

3. *Men and boys may become isolated or feel isolated, alone, depressed because they can't talk to anyone about things that are really important.*

4. *Men and boys may limit themselves even more than society does in choice of career, because of lack of knowledge or experience with career choice."*

Second Day

On the second day of the Select Seminar, participants continued their struggle over the issues, though on this day they seemed more at ease with the discussions and the personal and emotional natures of them.

"I was quite surprised to see the honesty and openness of those comments—we are blessed to be working with each other on this project. Common themes are starting to surface—the need for positive role models, the effects of the media, single parent families and lack of 'connections,' to name just a few. It doesn't matter what district you come from, large or small, urban or suburban, all boys have common needs. As educators, we need to come to grips with the fact that many of these needs can only be met 'outside' of the traditional curricular areas. Yes, it does help to have thematic units that deal with some issues in the classroom but we must also make the time for those outside lessons as well. This leads me to question the role of the teacher in my middle school. Should teachers be subject oriented or child centered? How confusing a question to ask in an atmosphere of 'higher standards.' Yet how can we encourage students to reach for the higher standards if we have not provided them with the necessary interpersonal skills so they feel confident taking risks?"

"I was struck by the isolation and loneliness that came through several of the writings from the first day. Statements like, 'It was great to hear that others feel the way I do.' I guess we really don't get an opportunity very often to express what's going on inside of us. I know we feel that the kids don't have this opportunity either."

"Identifying feelings through verbal sharing and communication is something young men have not been challenged with by our society. This feeling appears to be shared by almost everyone's comments from our last meeting. We need to challenge our boys to express themselves appropriately with words, not the animated actions of Sly Stallone or Arnold."

"Men helping boys with choices—this Seminar will certainly start as men helping men with choices."

One participant commented on role models:

"Real role models, listening, honestly, openly. These are the themes that spread through all the discussion from the last time. Themes about how teachers/men could

be with students to reduce student alienation from school, each other, and self. And also, I think, to reduce teacher alienation from school, students, and self."

And while one member seemed to miss the point of a Select Seminar,

"I was surprised to see that someone wanted to stop talking and become proactive. I can see this perspective. I can understand this completely. I often wonder what the purpose is of discussion that is not centered toward a goal. Our goal is to produce a program that will help young adolescent boys in some way. Talking with others does not seem to get us any closer to our goal. Maybe today we can start to produce/plan this program."

another member rued the rush to planning,

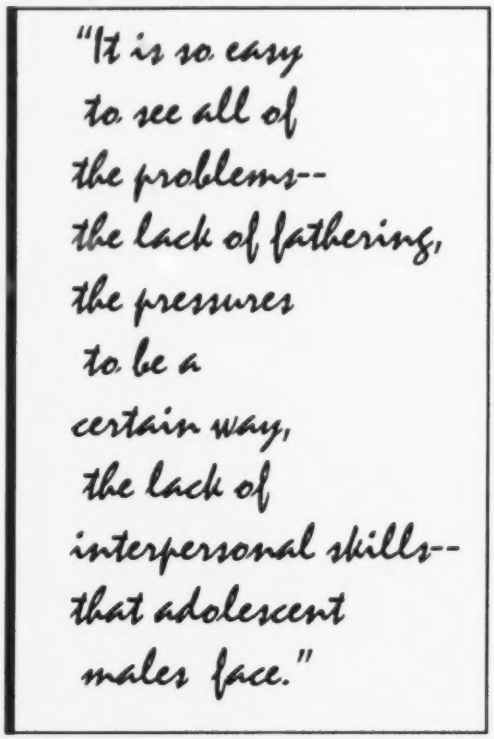
"I'm a bit disappointed that the group I am in does not discuss issues or feelings about the 'lost' students they want to impact. Mostly we focused on getting started: how to, when, where, what. This is, of course, valuable and necessary, but also it keeps us distant from the heart of what this project is all about."

But a third participant seemed to express the core of the Select Seminar philosophy:

"Our group's thoughts run deep! We have identified many issues and need to narrow them down, but I know we will be successful in putting a program together. I know this because I sense a strong work ethic developing. The ideas are many, and the group is working well. We are a great model for our students—how can we not be successful! One key to our success is that we feel free to express our ideas. We listen and we talk because we respect each other's opinions. I am very pleased."

And educator-author Deborah Meier would be very pleased with this teacher's comment, for she advocates just that kind of empathetic communication in her article "Supposing That . . ." in the December 1996 issue of the Phi Delta Kappan. She writes, *"My experience in kindergarten also suggested that schooling could favorably affect the development of another disposition that is central to a democratic society: informed empathy. Democratic society depends on our openness to other ideas, our willingness to suspend belief long enough to entertain ideas contrary to our own, and the expectation that our ideas are forever 'in progress,' unfinished, and incomplete. But it also depends on our developing the habit of stepping into the shoes of others—both intellectually and emotionally. We need literally to be able to experience, if even for a very short time, the ideas, feelings, pains, and mindsets of others, even when doing so creates some discomfort."*

An insightful participant commented on this program as compared with programs like "Women Helping Girls with Choices":



"I continually struggle with the elusiveness of a clear and tangible mission for this Seminar—clear in the sense that our goals with girls and women over the past 20 years have been so clear. For girls the goal of expanding choices related to careers and life can be so easily tied to the transitional goals of education—the mission there was to open up that area that has systematically denied access to half of the population. Our efforts with boys seem to be aimed at further opening up the educational process to be more inclusive of goals that are less tied to academics and more tied to developing qualities that allow boys to connect with others in ways that facilitate community building in schools—that enable the development of compassion, and a climate of respect, first for oneself and ultimately for members of the community. This is a more qualitative mission that contributes to its elusiveness and challenge—it addresses and demands changes in our traditional ways of viewing education and requires moving beyong the lipservice that has until now been the primary substance of efforts to create communities of respect."

On this second day, one of the participants summed up the concern and latent hope expressed by many members of the Seminar:

"It is so easy to see all of the problems—the lack of fathering, the pressure to be a certain way, the lack of interpersonal skills—that adolescent males face. It's easy to feel overwhelmed and hopeless concerning the enormity of the problems. Perhaps it is necessary to face those emotions before tackling the task at hand. The reality is that we, as men, are constantly dealing with the task at hand by the way we live our lives in front of our sons and the students we interact with everyday. We are constantly sending the message 'this is what a man looks like.' We need to make sure that we are sending the message we want to send instead of the one we were programmed to send by our fathers and society."

Third & Fourth Days

The third and fourth days were designed to provide an intensive time for the school teams to start planning the concrete and specific details of the pilot programs. Being away from school and distractions and having a significant amount of time provided the teams with the optimum environment for forging and then refining their plans.

At the end of the second day, each team reported, in detail, the plans which they had developed for programs which would be implemented in the spring. In addition, Seminar members were encouraged at specific times during the two days to write stories from their personal lives which reflected on the Seminar topic. Some of those stories, powerful and personal, appear below:

Fifteen

"Today in celebration of my father, I remember when I was a disenfranchised and rebellious fifteen-year-old who 'borrowed' a car and got caught by the police. Afraid to tell my parents, and with all the unscrupulousness of an adolescent, I tried to get the ticket 'fixed,' and when that didn't work, I suffered in silence until the day before the night I was to appear in court; then I told my mother, who, I thought, was the more accessible and sane of my parents, about my predicament. She went unprecedentedly ballistic, and by the time my father got home, she had gone to bed with a migraine. My father, the distant, unapproachable worker, took me to court that night and stood beside me when the judge lectured me and fined me—twenty dollars—and told me I couldn't get a license until I was at least eighteen years old. I don't remember my conversation with my father that night, no moralizing that I recall or scolding, but I remember distinctly the comfort I felt when he stood next to me in front of the justice. He was like a golden light. So I feel a need today to stand next to people: not necessarily bratty adolescent boys like I was forty years ago, but today next to men who struggle to find ways to let boys know what we know; what we've learned; what we're like. Thanks, dad."

Bert

"Bert is a 15 year old boy who has been raised mostly by his father. His dad's technique is to do for Bert, give things to Bert and make excuses for Bert. He shows Bert a lot of love and concern. In this sense he is a positive male role model. However, he doesn't model strength, commitment, adherence to a value system, or decision making. As a result Bert is unmotivated, disrespectful, and undisciplined. Our job as positive male role models is and will be to model a care-giver as someone who deserves respect, asks for commitment and hard work, and can make a decision and stick with it despite pressure to cave in. Bert and others like him need to understand and feel at a gut level that unconditional love is very important, but so is a love and caring that sets standards and goals for the loved one. Traditionally, the mother in the home provided the unconditional love and the father set the standards for acceptable behavior and demanded that the kids tow the line. In today's changing society sometimes the opposite is true. In single parent homes many times the child gets only one kind of love. Our program will try to broaden our students' definition of love."

Sam

"I am continually facing situations with students who have many good qualities yet have a side to their persona that is underdeveloped and often rather disturbing. Let me share with you an example of one such young man. Sam is a very popular student. He is in his senior year and has been the star athlete of his school since his sophomore year. Sam is faster, stronger and has more athletic skill that any of his peers. Sam is also smart and handsome, the kind of boy that other kids look to for leadership. Because he has these qualities, I was astounded by an incident that occurred during and after a football practice this season. The team manager (a very kind, physically and intellectually handicapped teenager) was participating in drills with the team. During a drill there was a dispute that developed between Sam and the team manager. Sam, believing that he was being disrespected, threatened to punch out the manager. Upon hearing the threat, the coach asked Sam to leave. Sam responded that he would 'get him outside,' a threat that was followed up on but thwarted by people who were asked to escort the manager home. This may sound like an average story about two kids who almost got into a fight, but I believe it shows much more. Sam has grown up with this handicapped boy and was well aware of his limitations. Sam is capable of beating up

most people, he is a formidable young man. With little effort he could have hurt the team manager very badly. Sam had a difficult time understanding in discussions the following day that the solution he sought was less than 'manly' and the respect he desired would have come to him if he had chosen a less aggressive approach. The questions have to be asked, What kind of role models has Sam had in his life? What kind of person has to defend his manhood against a handicapped person with physical violence? The answers are a person with no or very poor role models, who has a distorted view of what it takes to be a real man. *We need to help these kids. What we are doing is important."*

Jay

"Jay explodes. He tips over desks, throws books, hits classmates. Afterwards he retreats into a cave of silent anger where he can't be reached for perhaps an hour or more. He cannot deal with the everyday jibes and insults of the other kids in his class. If he is to remain in our school he will need to develop strategies to cope with his anger everyday. Our positive male role model program will expose him to adult and peer models of behavior which will help internalize a more peaceful way of being. Most of his peers face the same problems only to a lesser degree. Our sharing times, when we trade stories or concerns will make this evident to him. It is important for him to know he is not alone in feeling this way. Part of the sharing will be relating our strategies to deal with problems we face. It is important for Jay to learn strategies for dealing with anger from his peers as well as adults.

Beyond confession and advice, the most important contribution an ongoing male group can give a boy is the repeated exposure (in a social setting, not a classroom setting) to the way males behave or should behave."

MVP

"I remember a significant lesson on honesty in my life. As a high school senior, I played baseball for our school team. I felt I deserved to be selected as MVP for the year. When the time came to vote, I felt that I shouldn't vote for myself, but I did not want to then vote for the player I felt to be second best and have him win. I deserved it! So I voted for a third person I thought was a distant third. This third (distant) person and I tied in the balloting, and he won in a run-off vote. I advise students to vote honestly and be true to themselves."

Kevin

"As I walked down the hallway, Kevin, a seventh grader, yells to me, 'It works!' I continue on, not responding to him verbally, just giving him 'two thumbs up.' Some of the other students in the hall turn their heads, some pay no attention, and some ask Kevin what's going on. Hopefully he'll tell them. Kevin and I have been working on a very important formula: intelligence over emotions or I/E. A bright boy, Kevin has always solved his problems with either being louder, stronger, or more disrespectful. Unfortunately for Kevin, this always gets him into trouble while at school. It took a while for Kevin to clearly listen to and understand my suggestion, maybe even to trust me, and follow through with it. But when that time finally came, he reaped the rewards. Now I possess no magical formula with I/E. In Kevin's case, I truly feel he needed an adult to offer:

1. ***suggestions to help him solve his own problems related to self-control/behavior***
2. ***encouragement and support***
3. ***someone to listen so he could express himself in a controlled environment***

Too often I see students like Kevin who feel that no one will take the time to listen and work with them. Yes, it is time consuming, but Kevin got into a situation where no one was spending any time with him encouraging, modeling or supporting. He is just one example of why Men Helping Boys is an important program."

Fourteen-year-old

"I will always remember the day my fourteen-year-old son said to me, 'Dad, you're going 65 in a 55 mph speed zone.' It was then that I realized I needed to re-evaluate my behavior. My son was not only recognizing that I was speeding in zone, but also that he knew that I was a police officer. I know that he wants to become a police officer. I realized that I failed as a role model by speeding, and disregarding the law that I enforce."

Personal Reflection

"There are a few times, regrettably, in my life that I can point to and say, 'Here is a moment, I saw clearly.' A sudden sharp moment of understanding, where I knew what it was that I had to do. At twenty, during a lonely, despairing walk on a winter's night, I had such a moment.

"A month before, I had been to my grandfather's funeral. I had seen his body laid out in the funeral parlor, stood next to my dad, watched him reach out and take his father's hand, in order to show me how their two hands were similar. In the middle of this demonstration, dad lost his composure with such suddenness, that he knocked his glasses off trying to hide his tears. I had never seen my father cry.

"I reached out to put my arms around him, only to have my two uncles forcibly pull me away and carry me out to the street - literally. I was bewildered and a little pissed but they just shook their heads and said, 'No.' Not to anything specific, but 'No,' I shouldn't acknowledge my dad's emotions. 'He'll be fine. Let 'em deal with it.' In a minute my dad came down the step to the curbside, smiling, glasses restored—nothing had happened. When I asked him if he was all right, later on, he turned to me venomously, swore, and warned me not to ask such a stupid question.

"Here is a moment, I saw so clearly"

"This was the thought and image swimming in my head that cold night. I knew my father had grieved and then gotten angry, why he had cloaked his reaction and resented my intruding question. He had never settled himself with his dad. His father had never held him, never said to him, 'I am proud of you. I love you,' or even acknowledged his intelligence. I knew my father had never told his dad any of these things, and now, never would be able to. He could only hold his dead hand and cry.

"And that's how I saw him in my mind, as I walked that night. His father had raised him hard, beaten him, given him life and hope and hurt him bad while providing these things. My father raised me much the same way. His violence and emotional distance made a wide chasm between us. And as I walked that night, the moment of clarity I had was this: I would end up, just like my father, at the side of his coffin, all the pent up words spilling stupidly from my lips, holding his dead hand. Nothing would even be understood between us, he would never know

me in my own right, as a man, strong and whole. Unless I could settle the past with him, confront him and say the unspeakable thoughts, pour my anger at his feet, not as a challenge, but as a reckoning, unless I could do this, a part of me would never happen. This terrified me because I knew it was true—the truest thing I had ever known about myself.

"So I called him and asked to get together for dinner. Without missing a beat, he agreed and to my relief, selected a restaurant. A public place would be good, especially, if things got out of control—police could be called. I was aware of what might happen and readied myself for disappointment. I learned early not to want too much from him. At the end of high school and through college, we moved around each other uncomfortably. Conversations were tight because the chance of an explosive argument was always present. Arguments led to other things. So I prepared for the conversation that we had decided not to have all these years.

"The dinner began politely and I worried that I'd lose my nerve and not tell him my real purpose for getting together. I worried that he'd beat me to the punch, even, and in an amazing move steal my chance to show courage by asking if there was something on my mind.

"I set my fork and knife down and began. I told him I was going to speak honestly, that I needed him to listen, and despite what I might say, I was here tonight beause he was my father, I loved him, and I wanted a real relationship with him. And then I said it, 'I don't want anything between us if one of us dies. Not like you and Grandpa.' His eyes narrowed on me, but then he nodded and I talked.

"I may not tell you I love you, but that doesn't mean I don't. You are my son, know that I love you."

"I told him everything—the hate I'd carried because of the violence he'd done to me, our family. All of it came out and he listened. He watched my face and took it all in. When I finished, he took out his wallet and removed an old newspaper column—an article by Ann Landers, with a letter from the actor Ricardo Montalban, to his son. The substance of the letter was this, 'I may not tell you I love you, but that doesn't mean I don't. You are my son, know that I love you. You will have friends, but their loyalty will pass. I will always be at your side—you are mine. We disagree on many things, but honor what I say because I am your father. I will respect you as you become the man you wish to be.'

" He returned from the bathroom, asked me if I'd read it. As I nodded, he picked it up, set it in the ashtray and burned it. He told me he'd carried it for twelve years because it said what he could not, but needed to, and because he thought maybe one day I'd understand. He felt today was that day. I smiled.

"At home, everyone was asleep, we sat in the kitchen darkness. My father serves no one; things are brought to him. Tonight, he couldn't offer to get me enough. 'Soda? A drink? Ice with that?' As I poured a glass, I felt his hand on my back, him close to me. 'Don't stay away so long. When do you come home from school next? Drop a line. I'll write back, I promise.'

"Sitting alone that night in my apartment, I didn't want to sleep. There was a magic that had happened and I had to enjoy it, to think about how it had really happened, how we'd listened to each other, no punches flying. I had bared myself, had explained that I needed him, and he had acknowledged that I was a man.

"I began calling him a couple of times a month, to touch base, to ask for advice.

"It was a year or two after that I realized how the miracle had occurred. After his father died, Dad understood what he'd lost. I imagine he saw me across the chasm and hoped I'd make the effort. In his silence, he waited. In the night, I walked toward him."

Fifth Day

The final day of the Select Seminar was a day of celebration as the school teams presented the final program they had completed or would complete in the near future. Those programs appear at the end of this report.

Summarizing the Seminar evaluations was this comment:

"I have enjoyed the sharing of ideas, philosophies and thoughts by the participants. I have had an opportunity to reflect on the many issues that have been discussed and feel that my vision has been widened. It's very easy to be of the mind that things are the way they are and probably will not change. However, the experience of being a part of this group has made me realize that things can be different, things can change and it's okay if the changes are small at first. It's the continuation of small increments of change over a period of time that make for a lasting difference."

One comment succinctly summarized a conclusion that appeared in many of the written evaluations of the Select Seminar topic:

"All the pilots sound like big successes, and I wonder why we don't have more successes in the classroom, or why doesn't the classroom work as well? We certainly work at it as hard. Is it time to look harder at 'the way' we teach? Educators sometimes are progressive thinkers but conservative when it comes to the way we teach."

Finally there were comments throughout the entire Select Seminar which praised the Seminar process and queried why the process was not used

more in school settings. Several of those comments provide a sampling of all the comments regarding the Seminar process:

"This professional development opportunity is different from every other. Because we are the 'experts,' because what we know is already inside us just needing time, opportunity, and trust to emerge, take shape, be articulated to bounce off the ideas of others—and thereby be changed and be 'grown' from what is it as we begin."

"My thoughts go back to the creating of a 'safe place' for discussion for kids and adults. Let's give them what we have been given by the designers of this Seminar."

"Perhaps we should use the Select Seminar process model as a model for our program at school—even the writing part."

"It is such a rare experience to be able to spend a significant amount of time thinking and discussing an important issue in education without being interrupted, pressed for time, or feeling exhausted. This Select Seminar offers this all-too-rare experience."

Conclusion

The schools involved in this Select Seminar have taken a giant step to counteract the conclusions and criticism which Pipher levels in *Reviving Ophelia:*

"Junior highs often ignore what is happening to students as they are herded from one class to another. Between the ages of eleven and fourteen, students' issues are relationship issues, and their problems are personal and social. Academics take a backseat to urgent developmental concerns. Schools could foster groupings organized around talents, interests and needs, rather than cliques. They could offer students the clarity they desperately need—supervised activities in which adolescents work and relax together, conflict-resolution training and classes in which guidelines for chemical use and sexual decisions are discussed. They could offer awareness training in areas such as lookism, racism and sexism. They could take responsibility for helping adolescents structure all the social and emotional turmoil they are experiencing."

"Schools could offer clear sexual and physical harassment policies that protect students and establish norms for conduct toward the opposite sex. They could offer guidelines for appropriate sexual behavior and teach how to say no. This work with young teens might help prevent the 'gang bangs' and the date rapes of the high school years.

"There is something eerie about teaching our daughters how to fight off rapists and kidnappers. We need classes that teach men not to rape and hurt women. We need workshops that teach men what some of them don't learn: how to be gentle and loving."

"Parents can help daughters be whole by modeling wholeness. Androgynous parents are the best. Good fathers are nurturing, physically affectionate and involved in the lives of their daughters. Good mothers model self-sufficiency and self-love and are responsive, but not responsible for their family members."
Mary Pipher, Ph.D., *Reviving Ophelia,* Ballantine Books, New York, 1994

Averill Park Central School

Algonquin Middle School and Averill Park High School

Teachers:

Jim Goold, George McGowan, Martin Monahan

The Averill Park program consisted of Jim Goold and six 8th grade boys, George McGowan and five 6th grade boys, and Marty Monahan with six 9th grade boys. Boys met for approximately eight weeks. The eighth grade group was picked for compatibility, and was of mixed ability *(39 minutes)*. The sixth grade group was an in-place advisory group *(39 minutes)*. The ninth grade group was a "home base" group, scheduled 22 minute period.

At each meeting a story was read to the boys. At the first meeting, the eighth grade group was treated to pizza, and the sixth grade group had burgers and fries. The boys were also supplied with a journal and a pen. After the reading, the boys were asked to react in their journals. A discussion of the story followed, time permitting. Titles of the stories are listed. The stories were selected for decision-making, values, length, reactions, emotions, etc.

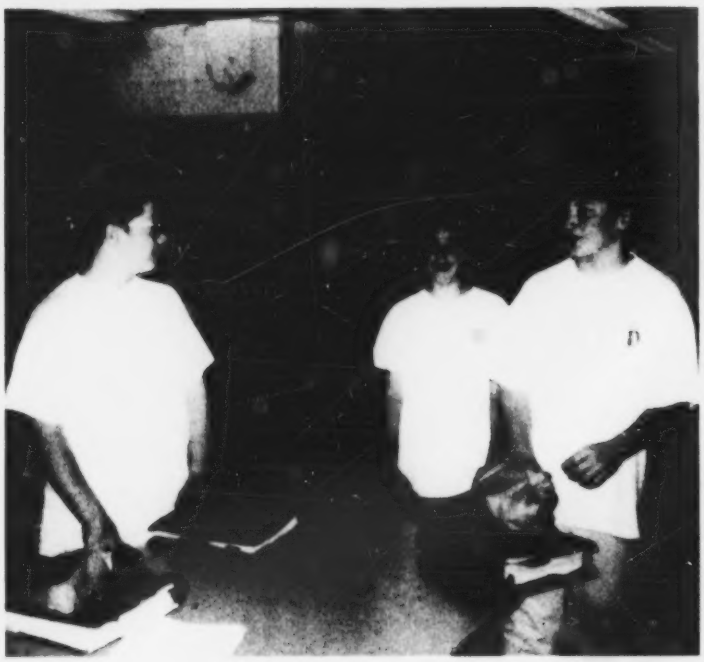
Goals:

- ***Listening skills improvement.***
- ***Encourage individual reflections in writing.***
- ***Present a variety of choices.***
- ***Develop empathy, compassion, etc.***
- ***Develop self-awareness.***

Success:

The groups of boys saw humor where it existed, got the moral of the story when presented, and reacted as expected.

Having a small group, a quiet place, food, all contributed to the overall success. In all the groups, the boys got along well, were supportive of each other, and in some cases asked to continue beyond the schedule.



Next Time:

Make sure to have at least one extroverted personality in each group.

Future:

Each participant plans to continue the program next year. Marty will try to have the present eighth graders scheduled into home base in ninth grade.

This activity produced, for a short time, in a busy, hectic, hurried day, a place to rest, relax, and think about one single important idea.

This program can be adapted almost anywhere. It's easy, minimum scheduling, minimum expense, and thoroughly enjoyable, both for the boys and the adults.

Sources of Stories:

Robert Fulgum, *It Was on Fire When I Lay Down On It, All I Needed to Know...*, et al.,
Aesop's Fables, various
Tales as Tools, National Storytelling Assoc.
Wisdom of the Seneca, State Ed. Dept.
Rudyard Kipling - various
Pink and Say, Child's book
Shel Silverstein, collections
Reader's Digest, various
Values, Scholastic Literature Anthologies
Chicken Soup for the Soul

Ballston Spa Central School

Ballston Spa Middle School

Leadership Program

Teachers:

John Antoski, Nicholas Bocketti, Andrew Pohl, James Weed

Participants:

Twenty-one sixth, seventh and eighth grade boys, seven staff members, park ranger

Focus:

To examine and exhibit positive character traits that include: Leadership, Decision-Making, Self-Esteem, Responsibility, and Competition.

Meetings were held to discuss the traits and teach new skills. A culminating orienteering adventure was held at the Saratoga State Park. A final overview and guest speaker finalized the program which ran for approximately one month.

Brief Overview

The staff of the entire Middle School had input concerning the 21 boys that were chosen for the program. An initial meeting of the boys was held after school giving an overview of the entire program. Participants were encouraged to write their own thoughts concerning the above mentioned character traits.

During the next three after-school meetings, informal conversations and information were shared between the advisors and participants concerning the character traits. Advisors shared past experiences and questions were often asked spurring on interesting dialogue and valuable introspection. There was also time spent on teaching skills needed for orienteering.

The fifth meeting was spent preparing for our culminating event which involved orienteering at the Saratoga State Park. Participants used their skills in groups around the school grounds finding specific locations and markers.

The "big event" took place during a school day at the State Park. Teams were responsible for finding five predetermined tags and returning to the base camp. The orienteering skills were necessary for success. Teams were monitored *but not assisted* by faculty members.

Lunch was cooked, served and a group discussion of the day's events took place. After returning to the Middle School, participants were encouraged to write how they may have used the character traits covered in the program during the orienteering event.

Following the orienteering event a final meeting was held in which the guest speaker discussed jobs related to the skills our participants exhibited. Pictures of the entire program were shared with the boys and the program came to a very positive end.

We will continue with this program with our experienced boys from last year and some new participants. We are planning to expand the program and will keep CASDA notified in the future. Anyone interested in a program like this can contact us for information hand outs, letters to parents, schedules, etc...

Special thanks to:

Joe Caughey, Vince Johnson, Jim Gula, Dan Pemrick and Steve Tousssaint.

Cohoes City School District

Cohoes Middle School

Positive Male Role Models

Participants:

Thirteen grade 6 boys, DARE Officer, two Classroom Teachers, Assistant Principal—all serving as mentors/role models

The Positive Male Role Models program at Cohoes Middle School was comprised of two meetings lasting about 1 1/2 hours each plus an all day session held at Hudson Valley Community College jointly with the students and mentors from Green Island School District.

The focus of our group centered on role models and the influence they have on our daily lives. The group defined a role model as someone you admire. The boys were then asked to write answers to this open-ended statement:

Role models

- *take chances or risks*
- *do their best*
- *do not quit*
- *have courage*
- *are leaders*
- *rise to the occasion*
- *are successful*
- *think.*

The pros and cons of these characteristics were discussed. The boys were then shown clips from the video *Brian's Song* and asked to identify scenes depicting role model characteristics. These scenes were discussed.

The joint venture to HVCC's field house was planned to allow two groups of "strangers" to meet and practice role model skills as well as forge friendships between members of neighboring schools.

The day began with introductions and some icebreaker activities to make everyone more comfortable. Project Adventure problem solving activities were then used to afford the boys the opportunity to use some of the earlier stated characteristics: taking chances and risks, thinking, leadership, doing their best and rising to the occasion. After each activity, a debriefing session was held to allow the boys to reflect upon the activity. Each participant was given the opportunity to comment on why the group was successful or not.

After a lunch break, the boys got involved in pick-up games of basketball. The teams consisted of boys from both schools, and the gym echoed with shouts of encouragement and positive comments.

The afternoon session consisted of a writing assignment on what it means to be a hero. This was followed by viewing scenes from *Brian's Song.*

Our final session brought this project to closure for the year. The boys were asked to evaluate what they learned about themselves and how this new knowledge would affect their lives.

The Positive Male Role Models program at Cohoes Middle School was designed to address Standards 3A from the Career Development and Occupational Studies Standards:

Students will demonstrate mastery of the foundation skills and competencies essential for success in the workplace.

Our program activities enabled the boys to:

- *listen to others and analyze what they heard; acquire and use information to solve problems*
- *evaluate facts, solve advanced problems and make decisions by applying logic and reasoning skills, demonstrate the ability to work with others, present facts that support arguments, listen to dissenting points of view and reach a shared decision*

Comments:

This program was enriched by doing a joint activity with another school. Seeing our boys working cooperatively with strangers assured us that they were learning and using positive male role model skills.

Timing was a factor for our group. Getting an earlier start on the activities would have been helpful so as to avoid the end of the year rush.

Plans are to continue working with the original group of boys and to bring a new group of 6th graders aboard.

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Green Island Union Free School District

Positive Male Role Model All-Day Program

May 20, 1997

Location:

Vanderheyden Hall GATES Adventure Course and facilities.

Participants:

All of the boys (35) in grades 6-8 participated as well as three faculty members and the Parks and Recreation Director of Green Island.

Orientation:

As a preset to the all-day activity, the boys viewed short takes from films that demonstrate men representing values that our program seeks to encourage. We also present male behavior on film that may be accepted as appropriate but embraces some of the traditional myths that diminish the overall male character. The film was followed by a brief discussion and written assignment. The assignment asked the boys to describe two qualities that they consider necessary to be a "real man." The completed assignment served as an entry into the all-day program.

A.M.

1. Short discussion of responses from the orientation assignment. The responses from the previous day were shared by volunteers and discussed by the large group.

2. *Adventure Based Activities.* Students and adults participated in activities that required cooperation and problem-solving skills. Each activity was followed by a short discussion related to the previous activity. Activities included the following:

* *Asteroids*—this activity served as an ice breaker and warm up exercise. This game is similar to Dodge Ball without teams and uses soft stuffed animals and requires constant movement.

* Vanderheyden Hall offers different elements for different groups to participate in. Our group chose the high elements ropes course, a challenging variety of activities that we felt appropriate for our boys who have experience with many Adventure Based Activities. Vanderheyden Hall provided three outstanding facilitators who served as positive role models for the group.

* The boys were then given individual pieces of rope and taught to tie safety harnesses around their waists. This required good listening skills and led to cooperation between participants as we sought to assist each other during the process.

* The group was allowed to participate in three different activities on the ropes course. Each activity required the participants to conquer their fears and walk across cables and logs that were 25 feet in the air. The adults in the group were impressed with both the effort that the students displayed and the support and encouragement that they offered one another. The eighth graders who participated in last year's program easily

slid into leadership roles and modeled positive attitudes that were observed and copied by the younger students in the group. We are proud of these present and future role models as they each demonstrated qualities that we were seeking to encourage.

P.M.

3. Yoav Kaddar, a professional male dancer, provided our program an interesting and inspiring afternoon. Our students witnessed a man of strength and courage doing a traditionally regarded female activity. Yoav described for our boys his life in Israel and the influences that helped shape his life as a soldier, student, performer, and son to his father. Although the group was larger than he was accustomed to working with, Yoav successfully engaged the students in a group dancing activity that challenged their strength and grace. It was apparent that as the group realized that they were having a blast, stereotypes were crashing down around us, and the boys were experiencing something special. Yoav then demonstrated two dances that he had choreographed. The dances were a very personal expression that fascinated the group, leading to many questions from his audience. The boys could not believe how much fun it was to dance in a safe environment free from put-downs and filled with support.

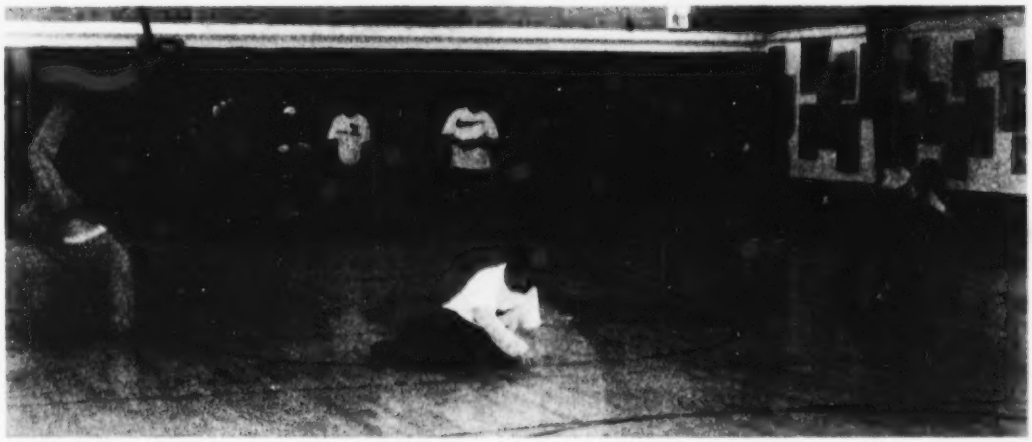
4. Writing activity—students were asked to do a written assignment. This was a follow up to the original written work done during the orientation session. Each student described how he used the positive qualities of a man during the day's activities.

5. Our last activity was a fortunate coincidence. A recent graduate and local resident who runs his own sign-making business was finishing work on a sign for Vanderheyden Hall. Our group was able to observe the sign, ask questions, and learn about the different personal qualities that have brought his business success.

Positive Male Role Model Program

NYS Learning Standards for Career Development and Occupational Studies

- *Through the following activities and strategies, our program was able to address many of the essential skills and competencies that the New York State Education Department has formulated.*
- *Adventure/cooperative based activities*
- *Discussions and written assignments designed to raise awareness of behaviors and expectations of men in our culture*
- *Interpretation of media portrayals.*



Skills and Competencies Addressed:

Managing Resources

1. Identifies, organizes, plans and allocates resources to accomplish goals.
2. Monitors, reflects upon and assesses one's own progress and performance.

Developing Personal Competence

1. Exhibits integrity and honesty.
2. Takes initiative and personal responsibility for events and actions.
3. Regards oneself with esteem and others with respect.

Developing Interpersonal and Citizenship Competencies

1. Participates as a member of a team. Works cooperatively with others and contributes to the group with ideas, suggestions and effort.
2. Teaches others. Helps others learn.
3. Exercises leadership. Communicates thoughts, feelings, and ideas to justify a position; encourages, persuades, or otherwise motivates an individual or a group.

Developing Entrepreneurial Skills

1. Meets and accepts challenges.
2. Acts appropriately when the outcome is uncertain.
3. Uses self-evaluation to adjust and adapt.
4. Experiments creatively.

Thinking, Solving Problems, Creating

1. Makes connections, understands complex relationships and interrelationships.

2. Synthesizes, generates, evaluates, and applies knowledge to diverse, new and unfamiliar situations.
3. Designs problem-solving strategies and seeks solutions.
4. Chooses ideas, procedures, materials, tools, technologies and strategies appropriate to the task at hand.
5. Makes decisions and evaluates their consequences.

Positive Male Role Model Future Plans:

The success of this year's program is partly a result of the work that both the students and faculty accomplished during the 1995-96 school year. The seventh and eighth graders who participated last year have built a solid foundation of understanding regarding the important concepts of this program. Indeed they served as leaders and role models during the activities and discussions that were the backbone of our program. Trusting in the safe environment that existed, students were willing to discuss sensitive topics and participate in activities that were emotionally challenging.

The only drawback that we can consider regarding our program this year would be the number of students involved (over 30 boys). This made it more difficult to find room and plan effectively for such a large group. The large number of students raises the cost of activities and will limit the number of programs that we hope to offer in the future. Next year it is our wish to work with a smaller group of boys and increase the number of meetings and activities. The group of students we anticipate working with would be next year's seventh graders. This group will be entering our Junior High and will be exposed to influences that they may have not yet had to process. By targeting this age group, we hope to have a very positive influence during this important stage in the lives of these boys.

Selected Quotes from Writing Samples:

- *"Real men are nice, fun, and friendly." 7th grade boy*

- *"I would like to become the kind of man that is respectful, brave, and someone who's not afraid to show their feelings." 8th grade boy*

- *"I respect men who are reliable, sensitive and honest." 7th grade boy*

- *"Three characteristics of a real man are honesty, the ability to admit when you're wrong, and be able to be a nice guy." 6th grade boy*

- *"I believe that a good male role model takes care of his family, works and is an all around good person to everyone." 8th grade boy*

- *"Today I learned that you have to be responsible for your actions. Dedication was very important because there is no use in trying if there is no respect for a challenge."*

- *"Teamwork helped us to get through the activities. Self-esteem gave me the confidence that I needed."*

- *"At first I wasn't going to do the project adventure activities, but I had people supporting me physically and mentally. This helped me against my fear of heights."*

Cohoes/Green Island School Districts

Positive Male Role Model Program

June 9, 1997

Location:

Hudson Valley Community College

Participants:

Twenty-one sixth grade boys from Cohoes and Green Island accompanied by six faculty members and the *DARE* officer from Cohoes.

Activities:

A.M.

To break the ice and to introduce the students to each other, we played a name game. Students tossed an object, announcing their name and the name of the person who tossed it to them.

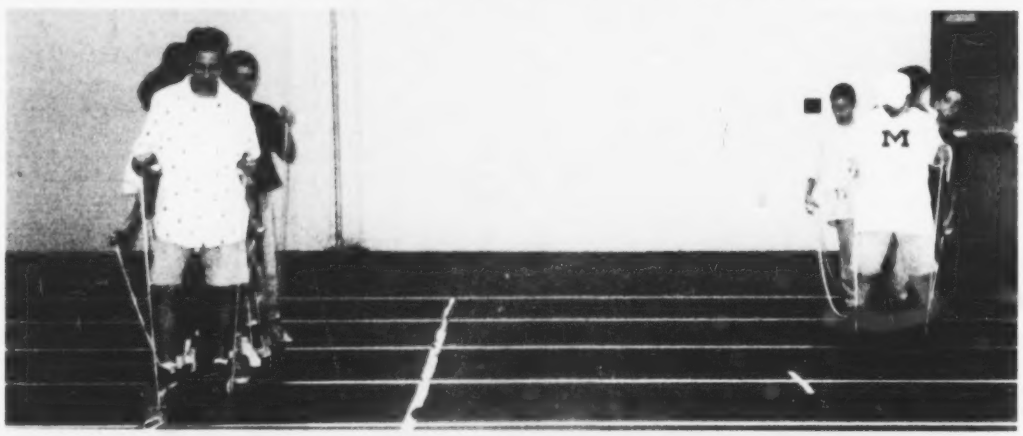
The next event was participating in three adventure-based activity games. The games that were used with the combined group were "The Peanut Butter Sea," "The Trolley," and "The Muse." Each of these activities requires the ability to communicate, cooperate, and problem solve. The boys were able to successfully use these skills to accomplish

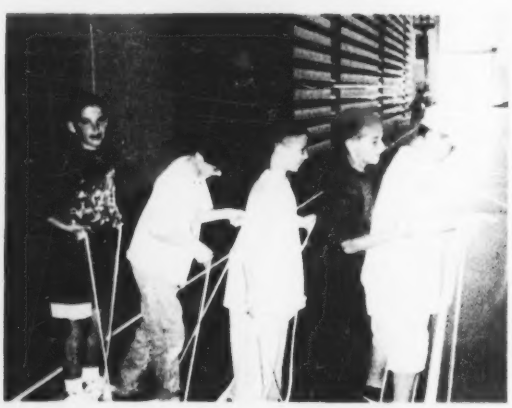
their goals. It was during these activities that trust and friendship began to develop between the boys who before this morning were strangers to each other.

Lunch was followed by a period of free activity of playing basketball.

P.M.

The afternoon session involved viewing a portion of the movie *Brian's Song*. The qualities of trust and friendship were discussed by the group and demonstrated by the characters in the movie. There were points in the movie when we paused to discuss and process what we were seeing. The responses from the students demonstrated an increased level of understanding about the important issues that our program seeks to foster.





Guilderland Central School

Farnsworth Middle School

Men Helping Boys with Choices Seminar on Young Men in Transition

When we set out, we decided upon two objectives:

A. *To present an environment where boys can address the following:*

1. *To explore the choices we make*
2. *To gain knowledge of ourselves*
3. *To recognize how our decisions impact our lives and the lives of those around us*
4. *To begin thinking about the future*

B. To collectively create a document that defines what it means to be a boy striving to be a thoughtful, responsible young man. This document will be used as a guidepost for others in future years.

We planned a two-part introductory program for this school year which we would like to continue building upon next year. These two parts took place over two separate days.

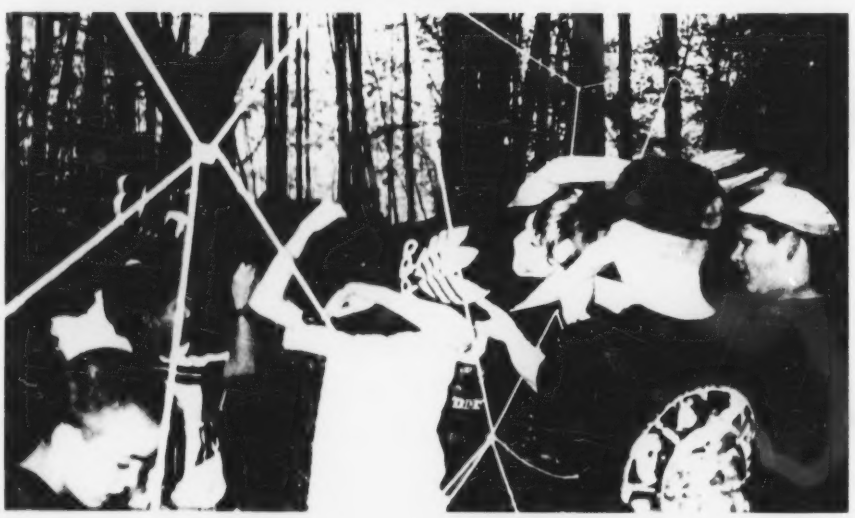
We began the first part of our program with one of life's most effective icebreakers: pizza. As the boys chowed down, our adult guests arrived, one by one. These men varied in age, and each had had different life experiences. After the food and soda had been devoured, everybody found a seat, and both men and boys introduced themselves. Mike Pipa took the floor to explain our work for the evening. He explained the objectives listed above, why our guest adults were here, and the major importance of the boys to the seminar.

Our next step was to show some examples of young male behavior through film. We dimmed the lights and showed clips from two films. One clip was from *Stand By Me*, in which two young boys, who find a moment where they are not pressured by the presence of their other friends or their typical environment, are able to console each other.

The second clip was from *Angus*. This clip focused on the relationship between teenage social outcaste Angus and his grandfather. They argue about the temptation of resorting to violence and the negative perceptions of others toward them. Angus learns from his grandfather's experience and wisdom.

After the clips, we broke into three smaller groups, each with four or five boys, one adult male from the community, and at least one teacher/facilitator. Discussion in each group was fairly loose. Topics included role models, the way people think a man should act, mortality, and responsibility. One boy from each group acted as recorder.

We met as a large group again and shared what we had discussed. At the end, Mike explained the second phase of our program *(Silver Bay)* and gave the boys a writing assignment: Write down what you think the characteristics of a young man are/should be. These writing pieces would be placed in one of our mailboxes before the Silver Bay experience. After questions, we let the boys go.



Stage Two: May 16-17, 1997 — Silver Bay Association

Day One:

Our bus left from the Middle School at 3:00 p.m., just before school ended. After a two-hour ride north, we arrived at the Silver Bay Association. The Silver Bay Association is a place where groups can meet to discuss their ideas without the distraction of everyday responsibilities. It also has a challenge course which raises questions about thinking, leadership, and cooperation. We all took time to unpack and put our rooms in order. There were two boys in each of five rooms and six teachers and counselors, who also shared rooms.

After some time for tossing the football, whiffle ball, and frisbee, we met in the dorm lounge to begin talking. We loosened up with some "getting-to-know-you" exercises before discussion began. Then we picked up where we had left off in April. We reminded them of our purpose and gave a new assignment for the week-end: we had to create a document that would explain what it means to be a positive, young man. After questions, we broke for dinner, which was excellent!

The boys were told to bring an important object with them. We met back at the dorm lounge to share these objects and why they were so important to us. Objects ranged from comic books to notes from friends to signed baseball cards to health. By sharing these things, we got to know each other better and felt more comfortable.

The evening ended with some kickball and eventually lights out.

Day Two:

After breakfast, we all hiked down to the challenge course. We spent most of the morning there. Our boys were faced with a number of physical challenges, all of which required forethought and cooperation. Several times, when it was clear that the boys were not going to achieve their goal, we had to stop and ask ourselves important questions: What is working? What is not working? Why not? Who is the "leader" here? Is he exhibiting positive or negative leadership? How can we work together to reach our goal?

By the time we reached our final activities, everyone felt comfortable offering input, leadership was positive and supportive, and they were all conscious of the fact that they needed to think before they acted.

We allowed the boys time at the end to write in their journals about the cooperation course experience.

An hour before the buses arrived, we gathered the boys in the dorm lounge and split them into three groups. Each had to address a specific question about what it means to be a young man in the middle school environment. We discussed their responses and put them together as a statement.

By the time the buses arrived, we were all satisfied with what had been accomplished at Silver Bay.

Comments:

We feel that for our first stab at this program, we have been successful. The first meeting was important for starting the thought process, but the Silver Bay Association experience made the program a great success. It was necessary to get the boys away from everything they were used to and to work in a new, peaceful, thought-provoking environment. The challenge course added a low-level physical aspect that appealed to our boys but also showed them the need for thought before action.

The apparent success of this year's program has encouraged us to expand a bit. Next year, we would like to incorporate a community service aspect to our program. We want to begin earlier in the year and have several growing experiences, instead of the two mentioned above. This year's seventh-grade participants will make admirable eighth-grade leaders for a program that we are confident will be an even better experience.

Teachers:

- *Michael Pipa*
- *Marty Curro*
- *Andy Wexler*
- *Larry Tuxbury*
- *Demian Singleton*
- *Fran Angellotti*

Collective Final Students' Document:

How much of a man are you? How are you doing in school? In your life in general? Are you thinking about your future? The way you act in middle school is very important, because it can affect your life in the future, in either a positive or negative way—depending on how you act. So, it is very important to stop once in a while, to reflect on how you act— mentally, physically, academically, emotionally—then you can change your ways. The way young males act in middle school can really come back to them in later years. So we should think about what we do, how we do it, and when the appropriate time is that we should do it. **Just think wisely!**

Males in middle school should be striving for intelligence: consistent and persistent effort, and creative problem solving. The reason for this would be so we can succeed in high school and in the future beyond. Strength—mental, physical and emotional—is also important. Young men need mental strength so we can stick to our ideas but not be pigheaded (shutting people out or talking over them when we don't like what they say). We need physical strength to help build our self-confidence, and we need emotional strength to be kindhearted and to relate well with other people. These strengths will help us be open-minded and determined.

As young men, we need to be focused on our work in the middle school and on growing up: building solid relationships and taking responsibility. We need to know the kind of men we want to be and we need to be strong enough to be ourselves.

Let your experiences help your future and give you wisdom to stop and think—and then courage to face the honest answers. **How much of a man are you?**

Greg Mahar	*Jim Allen*	*Jason Stewart*
Ryan Van Uithuizen	*David Peck*	*Jason Fannon*
Mitch Seymour	*Andrew Manuyag*	*Ryan Portanova*
Tom Vacek	*Mike McKinley*	*Steve Adiletta*

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Richard Bamberger synthesized the written notes and other materials to write this report.